

**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TOOLKIT  
FOR NEW AND BEGINNING TEACHERS**

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A project administered by

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# Professional Development Toolkit for New and Beginning Teachers



The PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TOOLKIT FOR NEW AND BEGINNING TEACHERS is a research-based video streamed program with accompanying resource documents. The program is an outgrowth of a previous Commonwealth Educational Policy Institute (CEPI) online mentoring study at Virginia Commonwealth University. The findings of the online mentoring study revealed twelve topics new and beginning teachers felt additional university training would have led them to more effective use of best practices in the classroom. In this program, each of the twelve topics is presented in two to six stand alone video segments. The total number of segments is forty five. Suggested uses, in addition to personal viewing by K-12 teachers for self improvement, include professional development, mentor and mentee, university prospective teacher, or small and large group training.

The facilitators are university faculty and practitioners with field experience. Each is currently involved in teacher training or serves as a staff development administrator. All are currently engaged in educational research, teaching and/or educational policy development.

The teachers in the video programs are classroom teachers. Some of them were participants in the 2006 Online Mentoring Study in which the topics for this project were identified. They represent all disciplines in K-12 grades.

Resource documents for the programs are provided as PDF files to facilitate the use of the 45 video segments. The first set of documents is composed of: (1) a description of the project, (2) an introduction to program facilitators, including a definition of each topic, and a list of the video segments, and (3) a research formative study summary that helped to guide the project's development. The second set of documents is composed of: (1) a description of the project, (2) a full text transcript for each video segment, (3) a set of problems and solutions related to each video segment in the form of a work-study guide, and (4) an annotated bibliographic summary of references and Internet links for each transcript. Many of the organizations and agencies referenced in the transcripts are actively involved in the development of video and professional development presentations that support policy and advocacy.

Every reasonable effort is made to present current and accurate information. Internet content, however, does appear, disappear and change over time. CEPI, as a university-based educational policy research institute endorses no specific position of any listed group.

# CLASSROOM CONTROL AND DISCIPLINE

## SEGMENT #4: ROOM ARRANGEMENTS

### VIDEO SEGMENT TRANSCRIPT

**Classroom Control and Discipline:** Knowledge of classroom management and discipline techniques essential to maintaining an orderly classroom environment that is conducive to student learning.

**Facilitator:** Dr. [Christopher Corallo](#), Director of Staff Development  
Henrico County Public Schools

AUDIO	VIDEO
<p>According to Dr. Fred Jones, and his study of classroom management, the physical arrangement of the classroom can have an impact on classroom discipline and the effectiveness of instruction.</p> <p>My name is Christopher Corallo representing the Commonwealth Educational Policy Institute at Virginia Commonwealth University and today I would like to share some of the best practices on classroom management. In this segment we will specifically talk about setting up the classroom's physical environment to maximize management of students.</p> <p>The purpose of arranging seats is to accomplish classroom tasks. The teacher must know what the students are to accomplish. Then the desks are arranged to maximize the accomplishment of the tasks and to minimize behavior problems.</p> <p>According to Dr. Jones, another purpose of room arrangement is to facilitate mobility and proximity. The best room arrangement allows the teacher to get from any student to any other student in the fewest possible steps. Arrange the space to reduce the barriers between you and the students and to help them see and hear one another.</p> <p>The physical layout must also reflect teaching style. If a teacher wants students to collaborate in small groups, for example, organize them around tables or clusters of desks. For frequent whole-group discussions, try a circle or U-shaped desk configuration. For an individualized, self-paced curriculum, you might set up learning stations. The room arrangement should match the instructional objectives and to the interactions the students must have to ensure learning.</p> <p>After the room has been arranged, it is important for the teacher to be as close as possible to the largest number of students for the greatest amount of time. The teacher's proximity to a student is an effective monitoring technique. It is not uncommon for a teacher to stand near a student who is having some difficulty. Teachers should also walk around the classroom frequently.</p> <p>Let's hear how our teachers have used the physical space to support management of students.</p> <p>I'm Dwight Van Rossom and this is the third year teaching first grade. In my first year I remember walking into the room and it already being somewhat setup and I'm thinking this must be the way it's supposed to be.</p>	<p>DR. CORALLO</p> <p>DWIGHT VAN ROSSUM</p>

Every classroom I've ever been in the kids are facing the board; the teacher's desk is near the board, somewhere by the door, and I found that for me. Personally, not in my third year, I don't teach the same way I did in my first year. And because learning styles have changed so much and we're trying to do so much to keep the kids engaged so that they're not always looking at the chalkboard, we have them working in groups and on projects and at learning stations. I find I am doing a lot more walking around rather than just talking at the kids from the front of the room. I have found it hard to come up with a room arrangement that is exactly what I want yet. But next year, my fourth year, I want to totally come in and red or revamp the room arrangement. I want to put in place a new and different arrangement that would be more effective for better classroom management and for meeting the learning styles and adapting to the individual needs of the students.

I'm Gaynell Lyman and I am a high school science teacher. The lab tables in my classroom are perfect for conducting experiments and also the ultimate set up for students that like to chat with a neighbor. There isn't much about the physical layout of the room that I can control, but I do have control over where the students sit. I believe that students need to learn to work with all sorts of other people (not just their friends) so I create opportunities for students to practice these skills by frequently varying their lab partners. The added benefit is that students periodically get to sit adjacent to the loop where I spend most of my time.

**GAYNELL  
LYMAN**

We just heard that our teachers believe that classroom arrangement has an impact on how they teach. Sometimes there is little control over how a room will be arranged, as in Gaynell's case. But she makes the most of her static room arrangement by moving students. Dwight did not realize that he did not have to have a static room arrangement and will be experimenting with different room and seating arrangements.

**DR. CORALLO**

## PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS

**Ask yourself:** How do you want to improve your classroom management plan? What do you rely on the most to solve behavior problems? What new skills or tools do you want to include in your repertoire of techniques?

### **Suggested use for this module:**

#### **1. Analyze:**

Please select one of the scenarios below and problem-solve a list of possible solutions. Record your ideas in the space provided. Discuss these ideas with your other educators (mentor, colleagues, or other beginning teachers).

#### **2. View:**

Watch the corresponding video on this topic. How does this information change your ideas?

#### **3. Compare:**

Revisit the scenario selected. Next, review the section entitled, "Possible Solutions" comparing the ideas listed with your own list.

#### **4. Reflect:**

How will you apply this new information to your current or future classroom? What goal will you set to help you begin to change your practices? What support is needed to help you accomplish this goal?

#### **5. Apply:**

List the first step towards change below. Create a timeline for success and place deadlines in your personal planner as a reminder. How will you know when you have met your goals?

### **Scenarios 1-4: Classroom Management**

#### **Scenario 1:**

The teacher is giving directions 4 to 5 times before the students are complying with the instructions. Why might this be occurring?

#### **Scenario 2:**

The teacher is using check marks on the board to track off-task behavior. Students who have three check marks next to their names for misbehavior miss recess or free-time. Behavior problems are continuing to escalate. Why is this system ineffective? What might work better for this teacher?

**Scenario 3:**

There are times during the day when students seem to be in a chaotic state (arrival, before lunch, and at the end of the school day). Students are wandering around the classroom and minor behavior problems are taking place. What procedures could be put in place to alleviate these issues?

**Scenario 4:**

A student sitting in the middle of the class has to be constantly reminded to stop talking. When this is addressed with him, he argues with the teacher and states that he was just asking a question. How could his teacher handle this behavior?

**Circle the scenario that you selected below:**

**Scenario 1**

**Scenario 2**

**Scenario 3**

**Scenario 4**

**Record a list of your own possible solutions here:**

**Summary & Goal Setting:**

## **POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS**

Teachers must establish an environment that is engaging, inspiring, and stimulating to encourage student learning. Maintaining good management creates a climate that is positive and promotes student achievement.

### **Building Relationships with Students**

Students who understand that you care about them as individuals will be more likely to comply with your expectations.

- Increase student participation and give all students a chance to ask questions or respond to your prompts. Track your interactions whenever possible. For example, pull nametags from a jar to vary

the students who you call on. Another possibility is to keep a checklist of everyone in the class placing a check mark next to the names of students who participate as you ask questions.

- Build a positive environment by telling students that you know that they will do well. Provide small hints and suggestions which will allow students to succeed in your content area. Just be careful not to give away all the answers. Try new motivational techniques to get your students excited about learning.

### **Communicate Clear Directions & Policies**

- Set rules which are meaningful and can be enforced. Display the rules in a clear location and share your expectations with students and parents.
- Teach your discipline plan to the students. Use scenarios and problem-solving to build the expected behavior and rules.
- Be proactive by enacting management procedures which eliminate opportunities for student disruption. Be certain that the following key classroom procedures are clear:
  - ✓ How to seek help from the teacher
  - ✓ How and when students may request a restroom or water break
  - ✓ How to be prepared for class (materials, readings, homework)
  - ✓ Expectations for group work and independent seat work
  - ✓ How to turn in completed work and access classroom supplies such as the pencil sharpener
  - ✓ Ways to enter and leave the classroom and respond to teacher requests
  - ✓ What to do when the student is tardy or absent
  - ✓ Safety procedures (fire drills, evacuation)
  - ✓ Signal to get everyone's immediate undivided attention (such as lights off, bell, clapping)
- Be consistent and fair while enforcing discipline.

### **Monitor and Adjust**

#### Proximity and Space

- Rotate around the room often. If you notice students are off-task, move to that area of the classroom while maintain your lesson. Stay within 3-6 feet from individuals or groups which need redirection. Rotate to all areas of the room during your lesson. One tip is to arrange the furniture in your room into a U-shaped design to accommodate easy movement around the room.



- Use gestures and eye contact. Often, teacher reactions such as gesturing towards a chair when a student is out of their seat or implementing the 'teacher look' as you scan the classroom will prevent difficulties from escalating.
- When you must correct students, utilize the following procedure:
  - ✓ Review what happened in a location which is removed from immediate view of other students in the classroom.
  - ✓ Listen to the student's feelings while remaining calm (remember to maintain a positive student relationship while enforcing your expectations).
  - ✓ Review what an alternative action might be and/or discuss a better choice for solving the difficulty.
  - ✓ Revisit the relevant rules and/or school policy that all students must follow.
  - ✓ Use an appropriate consequence or action immediately. Communicate that you know this consequence will change the future behavior of the student and that the student will be successful in the classroom in the future.

### Instruction

- Eliminate clutter which could be a distraction during instruction. Student desks should be cleared of unnecessary books, papers, and personal items. Stop periodically and make a quick announcement to clear these items from personal spaces.
- Reflect on what is working and what is not for the entire class and for individual students. If behavior problems are occurring consistently, reexamine what is taking place in the classroom just prior to the recurring event. What can you do as the teacher to be proactive
  - ✓ Individual student behavior problems may be due to academic performance. For example, if a particular student always has difficulty just prior to reading groups, think about the task the student is being asked to complete during groups. Is the student being asked to read material that is too difficult? Students who are experiencing frustration instructionally will often try to avoid or escape tasks which are too challenging.
  - ✓ Class-wide behavior problems may occur due to slow pacing issues or boredom. How can you foster a more enriching instructional environment? Tasks which encourage engagement include cooperative learning, hands-on manipulatives, choices, and/or differentiated instruction.

### **Consequences**

- Once educators have the groundwork in place, the plan is only effective as its implementation. Failing to enforce a rule (no matter how small) or warning students too often without consequences undermines your authority and can lead to more serious problems in the future. If you make a rule and fail to enforce it, students think that your rules are not valued or important. If you give a

direction and do not require students to follow it, you inadvertently demonstrate that what you communicate is not essential.

- Utilize a combination of rewards and loss of privileges to foster a great environment.
- Recognition/Reward: Students are given a reward such as a token, symbol, or object to indicate that they are on-task or demonstrating appropriate behavior. Examples of rewards include certificates, tangible reward (sticker or coupon), student of the week, special activities, tickets or tokens which are compiled for prizes, classroom job, access to special materials, extra time spent in library or computer lab, visits with another teacher, opportunity to read or tutor with younger students, treasure box visit, and good news calls or postcards.
- Consequence/ Loss of Privileges: Students experience a consequence or cost for the misbehavior. Examples of these consequences may include lunch or after-school detention, loss of part of recess or free time, behavior conference with student or parents, in-class suspension, parent call or note, time out or loss of an activity, or an office referral.

## ANNOTATED RESEARCH BIBLIOGRAPHY

- ❖ Many inexperienced teachers have stated that they had an insufficient repertoire of classroom management strategies to use when faced with a misbehaving student (Tucker, Plax, and Kearney, 1985).

Walker, Karen. (n.d.). *Classroom management for new teachers*. Retrieved October 14, 2007, from <http://www.principalspartnership.com>

- ❖ Teaching is one of the few careers in which the least experienced members face the greatest challenges and responsibilities.

Brock, B. L., & Grady, M. L. (1997). *From first-year to first-rate: Principals guiding beginning teachers*. CA:Corwin Press, p. 11.

- ❖ Some of the research on classroom management reveals that teachers feel more in control and more competent when they have a formal plan for discipline and procedures (Charles, 1992). Thus, when new teachers can focus less on discipline they can shift their attention to refining a methodology that bolsters higher achievement. Good and Brophy (1984) investigated teacher's basic skills and efficacy and found that many teachers felt their worth as a teacher was directly related to their successful implementation of management skills. However, one of the major concerns of new teachers and their principals is that many preservice programs contain very little preparation in classroom management skills, which can result in new teachers feeling inadequate when it comes to implementing a successful management plan.

Walker, Karen. (n.d.). *Classroom management for new teachers*. Retrieved from October 14, 2007, <http://www.principalspartnership.com>

- ❖ Approximately one-half of all classroom time is taken up with activities other than instruction, and discipline problems are responsible for a significant portion of this lost instructional time.

Cotton, Kathleen. (n.d.). *Schoolwide and classroom discipline*. Retrieved October 14, 2007, from <http://www.nwrel.org/scpd/sirs/5/cu9.html>

- ❖ American classrooms are frequently plagued by many kinds of student misbehavior which impedes the flow of classroom activities and interfere with learning.

Cotton, Kathleen. (n.d.). *Schoolwide and classroom discipline*. Retrieved October 14, 2007, from <http://www.nwrel.org/scpd/sirs/5/cu9.html>

- ❖ Many beginning teachers come prepared with book knowledge and theory but have little experience in controlling a classroom of 35 students. They tend to focus mostly on curriculum while wrongly assuming classroom control and discipline will just fall into place. The reality of how important maintaining classroom control is usually hits new teachers after the first few weeks of school when the honeymoon period is over for the students and they have figured out what they can and can't get away with in a particular class. This is one area where a mentor can provide critical assistance to help new teachers not only survive but thrive.

In many teacher preparation, induction, and mentoring programs across the nation, these issues are being addressed with concrete solutions and highly qualified mentors. Connecting with other exemplary veteran teachers who have experience and rapport with adolescents can also be a big help. New teachers at the secondary level report their teacher colleagues have a positive influence on helping them understand the challenges of adolescents. Conversely, elementary teachers felt their principals were extremely helpful in providing support and encouragement.

Hicks, Cathy; Glasgow, Neal, & McNary, Sarah. (2005) *What successful mentors do*. CA: Corwin Press, p. 46.

- ❖ Well-disciplined, smooth-running school environments are not the product of chance.

Cotton, Kathleen. (n. d.). *Schoolwide and classroom discipline*. Retrieved October 14, 2007, from <http://www.nwrel.org/scpd/sirs/5/cu9.html>

- ❖ Commitment, on the part of all staff, to establishing and maintaining appropriate student behavior as an essential precondition of learning. It is a component commonly found in safe, orderly, well-managed schools.

Cotton, Kathleen. (n. d.). *Schoolwide and classroom discipline*. Retrieved October 14, 2007, from <http://www.nwrel.org/scpd/sirs/5/cu9.html>

- ❖ A study conducted by Sparks & Bruder found that 70% of the teachers who participated in coaching felt that their newly developed peer coaching technique produced marked improvement in students' academic skills and competencies.

Sparks, G., & Bruder, S. (1987). *Before and after peer coaching*. Educational Leadership, 3, p. 54-57.

- ❖ Having determined that the use of certain classroom management techniques makes for well-disciplined classroom environments, some researchers have turned their attention to the question of whether significant improvements in classroom discipline could be achieved through the provision of teacher training in validated techniques. Typically, training programs include learning activities and practices in the areas of:
  - Organizing the room and materials
  - Developing a workable set of rules and procedures
  - Assuring student accountability
  - Formulating and explaining consequences
  - Planning activities for the first week
  - Maintaining the management system
  - Increasing instructional clarity
  - Organizing instruction
  - Adjusting instruction for special groups

Cotton, Kathleen. (n. d.). *Schoolwide and classroom discipline*. Retrieved October 14, 2007, from <http://www.nwrel.org/scpd/sirs/5/cu9.html>

Fitzpatrick, K. A., & McGreal, T. L. (n.d.). *The Effect of training in classroom management on academic engaged time in secondary classrooms*. Retrieved from October 14, 2007, <http://www.nwrel.org/scpd/sirs/5/cu9.html>

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